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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Thursday 21 September 1978 CG NIDC 78/221

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Thursday, 21 September 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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ISRAEL: Reaction to Camp David

25X1 [] A telephone survey by the Dahaf polling organization indicates that about 60 percent of the Israeli public approves abandoning Israel's Sinai settlements as part of a peace agreement with Egypt. Barring a major Israeli-Egyptian dispute over interpretation, the US Embassy in Tel Aviv believes an overwhelming majority of Knesset deputies probably will vote in favor of the summit accords.

25X1 [] Predictably, the Dahaf poll also shows a dramatic jump in the popularity of Prime Minister Begin, Defense Minister Weizman, and Foreign Minister Dayan. Over 78 percent approved of Begin's performance, an increase of 15 percent since the last Dahaf poll in late August. Weizman's popularity rose about 10 percentage points to 82 percent and Dayan's increased over 20 points to 72 percent.

25X1 [] An informal poll earlier this week of about 70 Knesset deputies showed that two-thirds support the Camp David accords. The US Embassy estimates that as many as 100 of the 120 Knesset members will approve the agreements.

25X1 [] The major procedural difficulty in arranging the Knesset vote focuses on Begin's intention to hold a separate debate over removing the Sinai settlements a few days after the vote on the peace agreements now scheduled for next Monday. Begin hopes to gain a parliamentary consensus in support of the summit accords and transfer to the Knesset principal responsibility for removal of the Sinai settlers, which he finds psychologically painful to advocate.

25X1 [] Opposition Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres demands that both questions be debated as a "package deal." Most Labor Knesset deputies reportedly are inclined to vote in favor of the accords and evacuation of the settlements if debated as a package, but they have threatened to boycott a separate session on the settlements issue. Acting Prime Minister Yadin, who says that a consensus of opposition and coalition leaders favors one vote, intends to try to change Begin's mind after he returns to Israel. []

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ARAB STATES: Damascus Summit

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[] *The leaders of Syria, Algeria, Libya, South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization convened in Damascus yesterday to coordinate their position on the Camp David agreements. Syrian President Assad appears determined to make his own decision on Syria's reaction to the agreements.*

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[] This is the third summit of the Steadfastness Front, formed last December to oppose the Egyptian peace initiative. To date, the Front has been unable to propose a viable alternative to the Egyptian-Israeli talks, and it is unlikely that much will emerge from the Damascus summit. Iraq has refused to participate because of its feud with Syria.

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[] The Syrian media have been subdued in their reporting on the steadfastness meeting--an indication that Assad is determined not to let the radical Arabs dictate Syrian reaction to the Camp David agreements. Assad's willingness to meet with Secretary Vance on Saturday--the first such meeting since last December--is a further sign that Assad wants to indicate that he favors a comprehensive peace agreement.

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[] Nonetheless, Assad probably views the Camp David accords as a thinly veiled separate peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. He has always feared that a bilateral arrangement would permit Israel to remain intransigent on the Palestinian question and the Golan Heights. The US Embassy in Damascus reports that many Syrians are unhappy that the Camp David accords failed to mention the Golan Heights issue.

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[] The Syrians, moreover, have to be concerned about their isolation in the Arab world and are probably apprehensive that Jordan will ultimately join the peace talks, leaving Syria as the only confrontation state. []

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LEBANON: Reaction to Camp David

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[] *The outcome of the Camp David summit will probably cause militant Lebanese Christian leaders to postpone at least temporarily their plans for a massive provocation of Syrian forces. The summit's results, however, have probably reinforced*

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[redacted]

the militants' belief that they can count on Israeli support for an eventual confrontation with the Syrians and Palestinians. We have no evidence that Israel is prepared to intervene to help the Christians.

25X1 [redacted] // Militant Maronite Christian leaders like Phalangist militia head Bashir Jumayyil and National Liberal Party chief Camille Shamun will probably conclude that the Israelis do not want a Lebanese crisis to jeopardize post - Camp David negotiations. [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] The Maronite militants probably have concluded that despite current restraints on Israel, the results of Camp David will solidify their alliance with Israel. They reason that Israel will be even more concerned about the threat from Syria and the Palestinians, and thus be more willing to support the Maronites in a showdown with their common enemies.

25X1 [redacted] Both Phalangist and National Liberal Party leaders have described the Camp David accords as "disastrous" for Lebanon because they do not deal with the question of the Palestinians in Lebanon. The US Embassy reports that both Christians and Muslims fear that reactions to the Camp David agreements will lead to more violence. [redacted]

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NAMIBIA: Independence

25X1 [] In the press conference yesterday during which he announced his resignation, South African Prime Minister Vorster also strongly implied that the cabinet has given up hope of reaching agreement with UN Secretary General Waldheim on a program for Namibian independence. He suggested that South Africa will proceed unilaterally. Vorster's successor, to be selected next Thursday, will not change the ruling party's basic policy on separate development of the races.

25X1 [] Vorster gave the press a detailed position paper on Namibia arguing that South Africa holds to its acceptance of the Western settlement proposal but that it will not accept "deviations" stipulated in Waldheim's recommendations for implementing the plan. He singled out Waldheim's recommendations for a UN peacekeeping force of 7,500 men, for a UN police component of 360 men to monitor the South African police, and for holding a Namibian election seven months after the UN Security Council decides to go ahead with a settlement program.

25X1 [] In fact, the Western plan proposed that the Secretary General set the size of the UN military force, that the UN civil staff monitor the South African police, and that a seven-month preparatory period precede an election. The Western proposal, however, also set a target date for independence of 31 December, which would have been consistent with the seven-month interval if the Security Council had adopted the Western proposal when it was accepted by South Africa in April.

25X1 [] Leaders of the South-West Africa People's Organization, however, did not accept the proposal until July, and Vorster argues that Waldheim's opting for the seven-month preparatory period shows his partiality for SWAPO.

25X1 [] Yesterday, Vorster told the press that the cabinet had not set a date for a Namibian election but had authorized the Administrator General for Namibia to do so. According to a press report, the Administrator General has announced that an election will be held from 20 to 24 November.

25X1 [] Such an early election date would be unacceptable to the UN Security Council because it would not allow time for other political groups to compete on an even footing with the group favored by the South Africans. Pretoria's move may be intended to stake out a position for hard bargaining at the UN

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[redacted]

and to reassure South African hardliners that no concessions will be made until Vorster's successor takes firm command. The hardliners might countenance a later election date, set by Vorster's successor, in return for other revisions in Waldheim's recommendations.

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[redacted] The non-Western members of the Security Council are unlikely to go along with having a session on Namibia postponed until after Vorster's successor is chosen. South Africa's unilateral setting of an election date might provoke the non-Western members of the Security Council to back SWAPO's demands for changes in the settlement plan that would be unacceptable even to South African moderates.

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[redacted] The parliamentary caucus of the ruling National Party will choose Vorster's successor on 28 September. None of the four main contenders would change the party's basic domestic policies. On foreign affairs, Defense Minister Pieter Botha follows a hard line; Foreign Minister Roelof Botha is more flexible. Minister of Plural Affairs Connie Mulder is considered a conservative in both domestic and foreign affairs. Minister of Labor S. P. Botha is thought to have middle-of-the-road views.

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[redacted] On the day after it selects the next Prime Minister, the parliamentary caucus will fill the vacant post of State President, which Vorster has indicated he is willing to accept. The office is now largely ceremonial. If a proposed new constitution allowing some limited power-sharing with Coloreds and Asians--but not blacks--is put into effect within the next two years, as the government hopes, the State Presidency could become a strong executive institution.

[redacted]

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IRAN: Terrorist Incidents

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[redacted] *The US community in Iran has generally avoided the widespread civil disturbances that have wracked the country over the past nine months. In the past few weeks, however, there have been reports of anti-US incidents in the central Iranian city of Isfahan, where 12,000 of the 42,000 US nationals in Iran live. For the most part, US residents in that city of 1.2 million are employees of defense contractors and their dependents. None of the incidents thus far has resulted in injuries.*

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[redacted] Isfahan, a center of learning for the Muslim Shiite sect, has been the scene of several anti-Shah riots this year staged by religious fundamentalists. It was the first city in Iran to be placed under martial law in August, followed by 11 others earlier this month.

[redacted] The US community in Isfahan is deeply concerned about recent firebombings, one against the residence of an American and the other against a US commercial facility, and a bomb attack against the US consulate. Neither of Iran's two major terrorist organizations has claimed credit for these attacks.

[redacted] A notable increase in harassment of Americans--telephone threats, a stoning of pedestrians, and tire slashings--suggests that anti-US sentiment in the city, though not yet widespread, is growing. A few employees of US defense contractors have asked to go home.

[redacted] A large-scale exodus of US technicians--though unlikely at present--would seriously impair the ability of the military to maintain its sophisticated US weaponry. The recent spate of anti-US incidents has prompted Iranian authorities to improve the security of residential areas used by Americans.

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BRIEFS

USSR

25X1 [] Soviet President Brezhnev arrived in the Caucasus yesterday by train from Moscow to award the Order of Lenin to Baku, capital of the Azerbaydzhane Republic. During the two-day journey, Brezhnev made a number of well-publicized stops to meet with local officials, in a manner reminiscent of his whistle-stop train trip across Siberia and the Soviet Far East in the spring.

25X1 [] Brezhnev is accompanied on this trip by party secretary Konstantin Chernenko, a longtime protege and the chief executive officer for the top leadership. Chernenko has been prominent at Brezhnev's side in recent months. He participated in most of the meetings Brezhnev held in the Crimea this summer with visiting East European leaders.

25X1 [] Also accompanying Brezhnev are Andrey Aleksandrov-Agentov, his senior foreign policy aide, and Valentin Falin, a former Soviet Ambassador to West Germany who now is deputy head of the Central Committee's International Information Department. Their presence suggests Brezhnev is planning to include a major statement on foreign policy in his award speech in Baku. []

Ethiopia-USSR

25X1 [] A Soviet delegation to Ethiopia's anniversary celebration announced the conclusion of an economic and technical cooperation agreement that calls for formation of a joint commission to broaden economic cooperation between the two countries. No new aid was mentioned in connection with the agreement, although Soviet technicians have been studying some \$300 million worth of agricultural and irrigation projects under a protocol concluded last year. []

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